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**AFGHANISTAN**

## SNAPSHOT

# Solar Streetlights Stabilize Panjawai

**New streetlights promote safety, security, and economic development**



Photo: USAID/ACEP/Zularistan

*Solar-powered streetlights recently installed in Panjawai*

***USAID is committed to building the capacity of the Afghan government to provide its people with clean renewable energy to power their homes, schools, and businesses.***

Panjawai is a major city that lies in the heart of Kandahar Province, a long-time Taliban stronghold. In 2010, Afghan and international military forces conducted clearing operations that drove the Taliban out of the area to protect the people of Panjawai from Taliban interference, intimidation, and violence.

To provide the people with greater freedom of movement by day and at night, the regional command proposed that USAID install solar streetlights along the road running through Panjawai's market area. In addition to contributing to safety and security, the streetlights would also support regional stabilization efforts and local economic development.

USAID was quick to accept the recommendation and by the end of the year, had erected twelve solar streetlights, which are now providing illumination through the night for Panjawai's market bazaar and a nearby mosque.

Each of the 120 watt streetlights comprises an encased high-efficiency LED lamp, a PV panel, deep-cycle battery, timer, and pole. The PV-powered streetlights are capable of providing light all night long, even after several consecutive cloudy days. They can be used even if electric power is available, as the reduced load and energy savings translate into lower operating costs.

The systems are warranted by the installer for two years. The PV modules themselves are guaranteed for 25 years, and future battery replacements are not anticipated until after five to seven years. USAID and the installer, along with other local renewable energy companies, are planning maintenance and repair strategies, including battery recycling and exchange services.

Installation of the streetlights presented USAID and the local installer, Zularistan, with numerous challenges, including customs delays, transportation problems, and security threats. These were ultimately overcome to the satisfaction of Panjawai's market-goers and merchants.

In the words of one evening shopper, "The lights make crossing the road safer, and the shops are open longer. This is a good thing for us!"